

Name _____

George Moses Horton**Instructions :**

After reading the short biography and acrostic, answer a few questions about the life of George Moses Horton.

George Moses Horton was born around 1797 in Northampton County, North Carolina. He was born a slave, the property of William Horton. When he was a child, the Horton's moved to Chatham County and he taught himself to read. Horton also began to compose poems. In 1814 he was given to James Horton, the son of William and in 1843 to Hall Horton, James' son.

Before he was 20 years old George began creating acrostics, reciting and selling them to students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The acrostics used the names of students' sweethearts. Horton sold the acrostics for 25 to 75 cents. He also sold fruit at the university, and with this money he bought his time from his master at 25 cents (and later 50 cents) per day. In 1829, Horton published a book entitled The Hope of Liberty. It was the first book published in the south by an African-American. He later went on to publish two more books. Sometime in the 1830s George Moses Horton married a slave belonging to Franklin Snipes who was a neighbor of the Horton's. Although the marriage was not a happy one, there were two children born into the union, a son named Free, and a daughter named Rhody. Both children took their mother's last name, Snipes.

After the Civil War, George Moses Horton allied himself with a Federal soldier and moved north with him. He lived the rest of his life in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, until his death in 1883. Even though he is gone, George Moses Horton hasn't been forgotten. To learn more about him and others he knew, check out what the NC History and Archives Department has online to help tell the stories of their lives.

Acrostic**By George Moses Horton**

*Mistress of green in flowers arrayed
Alluring all my heart away
Replete with glory not to fade
Yet flourish in eternal may—
Eternalized by distant fame—
Void of a shade in bloom divine—
Pleasures await they sacred name
Or bid thee still proceed to shine
Who has surpassed thy heavenly mein
Expression will forbear to tell
Like thee not one I yet have seen
Let all adore thee lovely belle*

*So let our names together blend
In floods of union to the end
Or flow together soul in soul
Nor distance break the soft control—
How pleasing is the thought to me
A thought of such a nymph as thee
Reverts my language into song
That flows delightful soft along—
Return to me a soft reply
On which I much with joy reply
Five me they and them they heart
Entirely mingled not to part
Reline the tapor near expired
Seeking a friend so long desired*

What was unique about George Moses Horton's life?

Why was it unusual for a slave to write and sell poems?

Why did the UNC students purchase so many of Horton's poems?

What is an acrostic?

Name_____

Write Your Own Acrostic